

Snapshot

An update from the Education and Training Foundation's September Board meeting

We've made some real progress over the last month, which is helping us to make up for some lost time and to build the Foundation into the organisation we want it to be. The Board met on 27th September, and heard more from the Executive which assured them that, despite the small team of mainly interim post holders, the issues that need tackling are being sorted. The Board also made some significant decisions, which will enable that progress to continue apace. As normal, the minutes from the Board meeting will be published, but for now here's a snapshot of the main issues.

Our leadership and staffing

- We received 18 applications for the role of Chair of the Foundation, and 25 applications for the CEO post. Interviews will begin at the end of this week, and we hope that appointments will be announced in mid- October.
- [Recruitment](#) to the permanent posts is also going well and the closing date for these is 14th October. In the meantime interim, short term and part time staff are covering these roles. There are still some areas where interim support of the right calibre is required to develop the priority programmes before the permanent employees begin their new jobs.

Making sure we have informed decision making

- A proposal from the NUS, for ensuring the Foundation Board has learner representation was discussed in detail. Peter Davies had discussed the proposal with NUS representatives, and the Board have decided to adopt the NUS's recommendation that the learner nomination should be provided by the elected Vice President for Further Education. It was felt that the sector wide brief of the Vice President would ensure that they received a good balance of learner insights.
- In terms of ensuring that a practitioner perspective also informs their decisions, the Board decided to continue progressing discussions with the sector's unions and IfL. The aim is for a

professional, who is a sector workforce practitioner, to be identified and who has been selected against mutually agreed criteria.

- It is hoped that both the practitioner and learner nominees will be able to join the December meeting.

How we operate

- **Evaluating our impact:** The Board was updated on the tender to select an organisation to develop the Foundation's evaluation framework, against which the impact and success of all programmes and commissions can be measured. Chris Jeffery (Board Director, nominated by AELP) has agreed to be part of the selection panel. It was agreed that it was vital that this framework was developed ASAP, so that it can inform all of the Foundation's commissions.
- **Being informed by sector expertise:** The Board reviewed how the Expert Panels (which were proposed in the [Implementation Plan](#)) would work. It was agreed that these must have Board leadership and be comprised of real experts in the topic concerned who have been selected against publically available criteria. Most importantly Directors agreed that these panels needed to have a clear purpose: defining what it is they think the sector needs, based on the evidence from the sector; informing the Board to decide delivery priorities; setting specifications for the programmes the Foundation commissions and procures; reviewing programme proposals before they are delivered, and receiving evidence of their impact.
- **Engaging with the sector:** Their commitment to learners and learning, and how professionalism adds value to this, was what Directors felt should be at the heart of the strategy for communicating and engaging with the sector. Supporting the proposed approach to engagement and communications with the sector, the Board reinforced the need to continue to have a whole sector approach, making sure that we continue to use language which does not exclude some parts of the sector.
- We were really pleased to confirm that over 1000 people have now read [Peter's blog](#) and that the open communications of the last month are really starting to engage professionals across the sector.

Finances and legal matters

- The Board approved the appointments of KPMG as auditors for the Foundation, and Mills and Reeve as our legal advisors.
- There was a long discussion about the proposed commissioning and procurement approach and the balance between the need to provide services the sector needs quickly, but to do so in an open, transparent and cost effective way. This covered how work could be supported where there are legitimate claims for continuing it (e.g. where it had previously been funded by LSIS, BIS, SFA or others) and where it supports the priorities for the Foundation. Directors were supportive of the work Peter had undertaken to provide clarity to partner organisations about how we would procure their support. Finally, Director's committed to three things: operating within clear procurement rules; obtaining services through 'single source' by exception only; and to consider further proposals, that Peter will present to them, about work which may have a legitimate claim to be continued in the short term, with the provision that its impact is evaluated and it is openly tendered in the near future.